

COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM

TOM DAVIS, CHAIRMAN



MEDIA ADVISORY

For Immediate Release
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Davis, Local Members Travel to Dulles Airport For Hearing on Improving Baggage Screening Systems

Passengers Would Benefit From In-Line Screening

What: **Government Reform Committee Hearing:
“Installation of In-Line Baggage Screening Systems: Increasing
Safety and Efficiency for Travelers to and from our Nation’s Capital”**

When: **FRIDAY, February 17, 2006, 10:00 A.M.**

Where: **Chantilly Room, Dulles International Airport**

(Room is on the baggage claim level across from baggage carousel #1. Park in the hourly parking lot near the east end of terminal – roughly, rows 25 to 45 of the hourly lot – enter terminal and walk up ramp to baggage level. Signs will point you to the hearing room, which will be on your left.)

Note: **Chairman Davis, Congressman Jim Moran (D-VA) and Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-D.C.) are expected to attend.** Before the hearing, Members will be given a tour of Dulles’s existing baggage screening equipment. At the conclusion of the tour, just before the start of the hearing, members of the media will be able to meet up with the Members of Congress in the ticket lobby. This will provide good footage of the problems associated with the huge screening machines airports like Dulles are forced to employ in lieu of in-line baggage systems.

For more information about the tour, or for logistics of arranging a media lives hot, please contact Tara Hamilton or Rob Yingling of the Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority at (703) 417-8370.

Background: Following the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks, federal law was changed to require the screening of all checked bags using explosives detection systems.

In most airports around the country, these systems have been placed in check-in lobbies, creating additional congestion for passengers, compromising airport safety and security, and sacrificing airport and airline efficiency.

The two most common types of screening equipment are explosives detection systems (EDS) – which are the size of the large van – and explosives trace detection (ETD) – which are smaller and much more labor intensive.

Both stand-alone EDS and ETD machines require human operators to lift baggage in and out of the machines, making for a process that is labor-intensive, not the most cost-efficient, and can result in physical injuries to screeners. This process is extremely time consuming for both passengers and screening personnel.

There is an alternative: in-line baggage screening. Studies by both the Government Accountability Office and the Transportation Security Administration demonstrate that in-line baggage screening increases passenger security and safety, saves time, and ultimately saves money for airports, airlines and the federal government – and, thus, for passengers.

A fully in-line system – in which passengers would not have to walk their bags over from the ticket counter to the hulking EDS machine because the machine is integrated into an automated system – can screen more than 450 bags per hour. EDS machines can screen 180 bags per hour; ETD machines screen less than 40 bags per hour.

Like the great majority of airports in the United States, neither Dulles nor Reagan National has in-line baggage screening. Baltimore-Washington International recently moved to in-line screening in its new terminal, which opened last year. Only 12 airports in the country have fully in-line systems.

Chairman Davis and the local members want to know why the rollout to a fully in-line screening system is taking so long, given the clear advantages it offers with safety, cost, and convenience.

Witnesses: Randy Null, Assistant Administrator for Operational Process and Technology,
Transportation Security Administration
James E. Bennett, President and Chief Executive Officer, Metropolitan
Washington Airports Authority
Timothy L. Campbell, Executive Director, Maryland Aviation Authority

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